

Message Text

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ORIGIN PM-07

INFO OCT-01 ARA-16 ISO-00 SS-20 SSO-00 L-03 NSC-07 NSCE-00

INRE-00 CIAE-00 INR-10 NSAE-00 RSC-01 EB-11 OMB-01

TRSE-00 MC-02 IGA-02 PRS-01 /082 R

DRAFTED BY PM/SAS:DWMCCCLINTOCK:RG

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DOD/DSAA - MR. BILLINGS

ISA/IA - COL RIVERS

PM/SAS - MR. GREY

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O R 101326Z APR 74

FM SECSTATE WASHDC

TO AMEMBASSY LA PAZ IMMEDIATE

INFO DOD

C O N F I D E N T I A L STATE 072376

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: MASS, BL, US

SUBJECT: BOLIVIAN ARMY INTEREST IN PURCHASING US TANKS

REF: A. LA PAZ 2007; B. STATE 75554, 210127Z APR 73

1. DOD INFORMS US THAT M-41 TANKS NO LONGER AVAILABLE.
PRODUCTION OF THIS MODEL ENDED ABOUT 15 YEARS AGO; LAST
OF SALABLE SURPLUS UNITS RELEASED IN 1972, MAINLY TO BRAZIL
AND VIETNAM.

2. FOR EMBASSY'S INFORMATION ONLY, DEPARTMENT AUTHORIZED
SALE OF M-48 TO BOLIVIA AND SIX OTHER SOUTH AMERICAN
COUNTRIES IN APRIL 1973 (REF B); M-60 SALE ALSO AUTHORIZED
AT SAME TIME TO "BIG SIX" BUT NOT RPT NOT TO BOLIVIA. TO
DATE ONLY ARGENTINA HAS EXERCISED OPTION (ONE M-60 FOR
EVALUATION PURPOSES), ALTHOUGH CHILE HAS EVIDENCED INTEREST
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IN MULTI-UNIT PURCHASE. LACK OF MORE WIDESPREAD INTEREST

EXPLAINABLE BY FACT THAT WEIGHT OF BOTH TANKS (52 AND 53 TONS, RESPECTIVELY) EXCEEDS CAPACITIES OF MOST BRIDGES IN AREA; ALSO, HIGH PRICES (APPROXIMATELY \$250,000 FOR M-48 AND \$360,000 FOR M-60) APPARENTLY HAVE PROVED PROHIBITIVE.

3. SINCE WE DO NOT RPT NOT WISH TO ENCOURAGE BOLIVIAN INTEREST IN COSTLY M-48 WHICH GOB TECHNICALLY AUTHORIZED TO PURCHASE, SUGGEST EMBASSY'S INITIAL REPLY TO GENERAL ALCOREZA BE LIMITED TO LACK OF AVAILABILITY OF DESIRED M-41'S. UNFAVORABLE WEIGHT FACTOR AFFECTING OPERATION AND HIGH COST SHOULD BE NOTED IF INTEREST IS EVIDENCED IN M-48. KISSINGER

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